

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 IO-10 EB-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5021

INFO PANCANAL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 5407

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PN

SUBJECT: TREATY NEGOTIATIONS: REACTION TO CLEMENTS, BROWN,  
ROGERS VISIT

REF: A. PANAMA 5387 P041205Z; B. PANAMA 5392 P041415Z

SUMMARY: YESTERDAY'S VISIT TO PANAMA OF DEPUTY SECRETARY OF  
DEFENSE CLEMENTS, CHAIRMAN JCS GEN. BROWN, ASST. SECRETARY OF  
STATE ROGERS AND OTHERS IN THEIR PARTY RECEIVED FRONT-PAGE  
HEADLINE COVERAGE IN ALL PANAMA MORNING NEWSPAPERS, WAS CARRIED  
ON NATIONAL TELEVISION, AND WILL BE ACCORDED GREAT SIGNIFICANCE  
HERE. ALL FOUR MORNING NEWSPAPERS HAD LINED PENTAGON SUPPORT FOR  
THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS AND NOTED THAT NOW BOTH STATE AND DEFENSE  
WILL BE PUSHING ON FIRM PRESIDENTIAL ORDERS FOR A RAPID CONCLUSION  
OF A NEW TREATY. THE OPTIMISM PRODUCED HERE FROM THIS VISIT WILL  
ENGENDER PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS OF VISIBLE PROGRESS FROM NEXT ROUND  
OF NEGOTIATIONS TO BEGIN SEPT. 8. END SUMMARY

1. MEDIA COVERAGE, BASED ON A COMMUNIQUE PREPARED BY THE AMBASSADOR  
AND A REPORT FROM "CRITICA" EDITOR, RUBEN  
DARIO MURGAS, FOCUSED ON THE PARTY'S MEETING WITH TORRIJOS,  
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LAKAS, AND THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD ON

CONTADORA ISLAND. (TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE SENT REFTEL B.) OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE ARE SEVERAL OF TORRIJOS' COMMENTS ON CONVERSATION OF THAT MEETING. TORRIJOS NOTED THAT IT WAS VERY SIGNIFICANT THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SO MANY YEARS OF "STRUGGLE" THE CHIEF OF ALL U.S. ARMED FORCES HAD COME TO PANAMA WITH A POSITIVE MESSAGE IN FAVOR OF A SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT ON THE CANAL ISSUE. AS TO WHAT COMPOSES A SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENT, TORRIJOS STATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE VISITORS TO REFER TO "THE ONE THAT PANAMA IS SEEKING".

2. WHAT THE PAPERS CALLED "SEASONED POLITICAL OBSERVERS" NOTED THAT THIS FAVORABLE ATTITUDE OF THE PENTAGON "OPENS UP A NEW PANORAMA ON THE NEGOTIATIONS SINCE ALWAYS BEFORE THE VERSION THAT HAD BEEN GOING AROUND WAS THAT THE U.S. ARMED FORCES HAD RANGED THEMSELVES IN OPPOSITION TO NEGOTIATING A TREATY THAT RETURNED COMPLETE SOVEREIGNTY TO PANAMA." TORRIJOS, IN COMMENTS QUOTED ON NATIONAL TELEVISION NETWORK, REPORTED THAT GENERAL BROWN TOLD HIM THAT IN THE PAST THE PROBLEM WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS STEMMED FROM THE FACT THAT THE U.S. ARMED FORCES WERE OPPOSED TO THEM. THIS HAS CHANGED, TORRIJOS NOTED, AS DEP. SECY. CLEMENTS AND GEN. BROWN ASSURED HIM THAT PRESIDENT FORD HAD MADE A FIRM DECISION TO PROCEED RAPIDLY WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT AT THIS MOMENT THERE IS NO CONFLICT BETWEEN STATE AND DEFENSE REGARDING THEM.

3. TORRIJOS FURTHER SAID THAT GEN. BROWN TOLD HIM IT WAS ADVISABLE TO KEEP CALM DURING THE NEGOTIATIONS BECAUSE CALM BENEFITED BOTH PARTIES. PRESS REPORTS ALSO PICKED UP GEN. BROWN'S RECENT STATEMENT, IN A REPORT TO THE U.S. CONGRESS, THAT HE WAS SURE THE CANAL WAS MUCH BETTER DEFENDED IN TANDEM WITH THE NATIONAL GUARD THAN BY U.S. FORCES ALONE.

4. FINALLY GEN. BROWN WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY WOULD REPORT TO PRESIDENT FORD ON THE VERY POSITIVE CONVERSATIONS THEY HAD WITH TORRIJOS, LAKAS, AND NATIONAL GUARD OFFICERS.

5. COMMENT: THIS HIGH-LEVEL VISIT HAS UNDOUBTEDLY SHOT A GREAT INJECTION OF OPTIMISM INTO THE PANAMANIAN. WHILE PUBLIC MOOD HERE DURING JULY AND MUCH OF AUGUST APPROACHED THAT OF "BLEAK CONFIDENTIAL

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HOUSE", IT IS NOW ONE OF "GREAT EXPECTATIONS", SO MUCH SO, TO JUDGE FROM TODAY'S REPORTING, THAT RAPID AND CONCRETE PROGRESS WILL BE EXPECTED FROM THE NEXT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS. THE FIRM SUPPORT OF THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT FOR A NEW TREATY COUPLED WITH THE PLAY GIVEN TO THIS WEEK'S "U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT'S" INFERENCE THAT U.S. HAS AGREED TO A MORE FORTHCOMING, FROM THE PANAMANIAN STANDPOINT, POSITION ON DURATION, HAS ENGENDERED A LIVELY ANTI-CIATION FOR VISIBLE RESULTS IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND

REINFORCES ATTITUDES EXPRESSED BY GOP SPOKESMEN IN SEPTEMBER 2  
SEMINAR WITH AMBASSADORS (SEE REFTTEL A).

6. THE REQUEST TO TORRIJOS FOR CALM MAY DRAW SOME CRITICISM  
FROM ULTRA-NATIONALISTS AND FROM GOP OPPONENTS WHO WOULD LIKE  
TO PORTRAY TORRIJOS AND TOP GOP OFFICIALS AS "BEING IN U.S.  
POCKET." "PURE" NATIONALIST ADVOCATES HERE ASSERT THAT CALM  
FAVORS NO ONE BUT THE UNITED STATES, BUT EMBASSY EXPECTS THEIR  
VOICES WILL NOT BECOME DOMINANT, AND THEIR ADVICE WILL NOT BE  
TAKEN. TORRIJOS' PERCEPTION IS THAT HE HAS MAINTAINED GREAT  
CALM IN PANAMA DURING NEGOTIATIONS DESPITE GREAT PRESSURES FROM  
CERTAIN SECTORS OF PANAMANIAN SOCIETY AND WHAT HE PERCEIVED TO  
BE PROVOCATIONS FROM U.S.--SUCH AS SNYDER AMENDMENT AND  
OCCASIONAL HINTS THAT U.S. WAS NOT SERIOUS ABOUT  
NEGOTIATION.  
JORDEN

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